

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A medical equipment management apparatus for managing a medical equipment provided in a medical facility connected to the apparatus through a network, the apparatus comprising:

a reception unit connected to the network, configured to receive parameter data from the medical equipment located in the medical facility, the parameter data is information regarding a status of a specific component of the medical equipment;

a storage unit including a memory, connected to the network, configured to store the parameter data;

a prediction unit connected to the network, configured to calculate an expectancy of the parameter data, which is a predicted parameter data value expected to be received in the future, and is calculated based on the stored parameter data;

a determination unit connected to the network, configured to determine a value of the expectancy based on the relation of the expectancy to a first predetermined threshold level and a second predetermined threshold level exceeding the first threshold level;

a second reception unit connected to the network configured to receive a reference request for the expectancy from a requester;

a providing unit connected to the network configured to allow the requester to refer to information of the expectancy based on the received reference request; and

an informing unit configured to issue a notification message via the network to a first address when the expectancy is determined to be between the first threshold level and the second threshold level and to a second address when the expectancy is determined to exceed the second threshold.

Claim 2 (Original): The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the informing unit is further configured to issue a notice to a local maintenance provider which provides a maintenance service for the medical equipment.

Claims 3-5 (Cancelled).

Claim 6 (Previously Presented): The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the informing unit issues the notification message allowing a reference of a graph which shows the stored parameter data and the expectancy with the first and second threshold levels in chronological order.

Claim 7 (Original): The apparatus according to claim 6, wherein the stored parameter data and the expectancy are shown in a distinguishable manner.

Claim 8 (Cancelled).

Claim 9 (Previously Presented): The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the informing unit issues the notification message including a first content when the expectancy is determined to be between the first threshold level and the second threshold level and the notification message including a second content different from the first content when the expectancy is determined to exceed the second threshold level.

Claim 10 (Original): The apparatus according to claim 9, wherein the first content represents a necessity of a maintenance service for the medical equipment without urgency;

and wherein the second content represents a necessity of an urgent maintenance service for the medical equipment.

Claim 11 (Original): The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the prediction unit calculates the expectancy by statistically analyzing the stored parameter data.

Claim 12 (Original): The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the parameter data represents a characteristic regarding a part of the medical equipment at each of a plurality of times.

Claim 13 (Original): The apparatus according to claim 12, wherein the parameter data is given for each of a plurality of parts of the medical equipment.

Claim 14 (Previously Presented): The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the expectancy represents parameter data received at a predetermined time.

Claim 15 (Original): The apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the predetermined time is designated.

Claim 16 (Original): The apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a provider configured to provide the expectancy through a telecommunication network.

Claim 17 (Original): The apparatus according to claim 16, wherein the expectancy is included in a report which reports information of the medical equipment through the telecommunication network.

Claim 18 (Original): The apparatus according to claim 16, wherein the expectancy is provided through an Internet web site.

Claim 19 (Previously Presented): The apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a second storage unit configured to store maintenance contract information of the medical equipment, and wherein the determination unit determines the value based on the stored maintenance contract information.

Claim 20 (Original): The apparatus according to claim 19, wherein the stored maintenance contract information is changed by an external terminal connected to the apparatus through the network.

Claim 21 (Previously Presented): The apparatus according to claim 2, further comprising a second storage unit configured to store maintenance contract information of the medical equipment, and wherein the informing unit also issues the notification message to the local maintenance provider based on the stored maintenance contract information and the value.

Claim 22 (Previously Presented): The apparatus according to claim 1,
wherein the informing unit issues the notification message including a first content when stored maintenance contract information is a first type and the expectancy is determined to exceed the second threshold level,

wherein the informing unit issues the notification message including a second content when the stored maintenance contract information is the first type and the expectancy is determined to be between the first threshold level and the second threshold level,

wherein the informing unit issues the notification message including a third content when the stored maintenance contract information is a second type and the expectancy is determined to exceed the second threshold level, and

wherein the informing unit does not issue the notification message when the stored maintenance contract information is the second type and the expectancy is determined to be between the first threshold level and the second threshold level.

Claim 23 (Previously Presented): The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein a determining condition is stored for a user of the medical equipment, and wherein a content included in the notification message is changed based on the determining condition stored for the user.

Claim 24 (Cancelled).

Claim 25 (Previously Presented): The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the requester is a computer provided in a local maintenance provider which provides a maintenance service for the medical equipment.

Claim 26 (Previously Presented): The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the requester is a computer provided in the medical facility.

Claim 27 (Previously Presented): The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the requester is a computer provided in the apparatus.

Claim 28 (Previously Presented): The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the information is a graph showing the stored parameter data and the expectancy.

Claim 29 (Previously Presented): The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the prediction unit calculates the expectancy in response to the reception of the reference request.

Claim 30 (Previously Presented): The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the prediction unit calculates the expectancy at predetermined times.

Claim 31 (Currently Amended): A medical equipment management apparatus for managing a medical equipment provided in a medical facility connected to the apparatus through a network, the apparatus comprising:

a reception unit connected to the network configured to receive parameter data regarding the medical equipment, the parameter data is information regarding a status of a specific component of the medical equipment;

a storage unit including a memory, connected to the network configured to store the parameter data;

a prediction unit connected to the network configured to calculate an expectancy of the parameter data, which is a predicted parameter data value expected to be received in the future, and is calculated based on the stored parameter data;

a determination unit connected to the network configured to determine a date when the expectancy is substantially identical to a predetermined threshold existing in the determination unit;

a second reception unit connected to the network configured to receive a reference request for the date from a computer;

a providing unit connected to the network configured to allow the computer to refer to information of the date based on the received reference request; and

an informing unit configured to send a notification message over the network to a second computer according to the determined date.

Claim 32 (Cancelled).

Claim 33 (Currently Amended): A method of managing a medical equipment device, provided in a medical facility, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving parameter data in a reception unit connected to a network, the parameter data ~~regarding the medical equipment~~ is information regarding a status of a specific component of the medical equipment device;

storing the parameter data in a storage unit including a memory;

calculating an expectancy of the parameter data to be received in the future, the expectancy is a predicted parameter data value and is calculated based on the stored parameter data of the medical equipment device;

determining a value of the expectancy based on a relation of the expectancy to a first predetermined threshold level and a second predetermined threshold level exceeding the first threshold level;

receiving a reference request for the expectancy from a requester;

allowing the requester to refer to information of the expectancy based on the received reference request; and

issuing a notification message via the network to a first address when the expectancy is determined to be between the first threshold level and the second threshold level and to a second address when the expectancy is determined to exceed the second threshold.

Claim 34 (Currently Amended): A method of managing a medical equipment device provided in a medical facility, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving parameter data in a reception unit connected to a network, the parameter data is information regarding ~~[[the]]~~ a status of a specific component of the medical equipment;

storing the parameter data in a storage unit including a memory;

calculating an expectancy, which is a predicted parameter data value expected of the parameter data to be received in the future, and is calculated based on the stored parameter data of the medical equipment device;

receiving a reference request for the expectancy from a requester;

allowing the requester to refer to information of the expectancy based on the received reference request; and

issuing a notification message via a network to a first address when the expectancy is determined to be between a first threshold level and a second threshold level and to a second address when the expectancy is determined to exceed the second threshold.

Claim 35 (Currently Amended): A method of managing a medical equipment device provided in a medical facility, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving parameter data in a reception unit connected to a network, the parameter data is information regarding ~~[[the]]~~ a status of a specific component of the medical equipment;

storing the parameter data in a storage unit including a memory;

calculating an expectancy, which is a predicted parameter data value expected of the parameter data to be received in the future, and is calculated based on the stored parameter data of the medical equipment device;

determining a date when the expectancy is substantially identical to a predetermined threshold existing in the determination unit;

receiving a reference request for the date from a computer;

providing the computer with information of the date based on the received reference request; and

sending a notification message over the network to a second computer according to the determined date.

Claim 36 (Currently Amended): A management system, comprising:

a medical facility apparatus, provided in a medical facility, configured to transmit parameter data that is information regarding ~~representing~~ a status of a specific component of the medical equipment device through a network; and

a medical equipment management apparatus configured to store the parameter data in a memory and to calculate an expectancy, which is a predicted parameter data value expected of the parameter data to be received in the future, and is calculated based on the parameter data transmitted from the medical facility apparatus, to determine a value of the expectancy based on a relation of the expectancy to a first predetermined threshold level and a second predetermined threshold level exceeding the first threshold level, and to output a notification

message indicating a situation of the medical equipment via the network to a first address when the expectancy is determined to be between the first threshold level and the second threshold level and to a second address when the expectancy is determined to exceed the second threshold, the medical equipment management apparatus also configured to receive a reference request for the expectancy from a requester.

Claim 37 (Currently Amended): A management system, comprising:

a medical facility apparatus, provided in a medical facility, configured to transmit parameter data that is information regarding ~~representing~~ a status of a specific component of the medical equipment device through a network;

a medical equipment management apparatus configured to store the parameter data in a memory and to calculate an expectancy of the parameter data, which is a predicted parameter data value expected to be received in the future, and is calculated based on the parameter data transmitted from the medical facility apparatus, to determine a value of the expectancy based on a relation of the expectancy to a first predetermined threshold level and a second predetermined threshold level exceeding the first threshold level, and to transmit information of the expectancy through the network the medical equipment management apparatus also configured to receive a reference request for the expectancy from a requester; and

a terminal equipment configured to receive and display the information transmitted from the medical equipment management apparatus.

Claim 38 (Currently Amended): A monitoring apparatus for managing an equipment connected to the apparatus through a network, the apparatus, comprising:

a reception unit connected to the network configured to receive data from the equipment a plurality of times, the data is information regarding the status of a specific component of the equipment;

a storage unit including a memory, connected to the network configured to store the data;

a prediction unit connected to the network configured to calculate an expectancy of the predicted data to be received in the future, and the expectancy is calculated based on the stored data;

a determination unit connected to the network configured to determine a date when the expectancy is substantially identical to a predetermined threshold existing in the determination unit;

a second reception unit connected to the network configured to receive a reference request for the expectancy from a requester;

a providing unit connected to the network configured to allow the requester to refer to information of the expectancy based on the received reference request;

an informing unit connected to the network configured to issue a notice through the network; and

an informing unit configured to send a notification message over the network to a second computer according to the determined date.

Claims 39-48 (Canceled).

Claim 49 (Previously Presented): The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the notification message is an e-mail.

Claim 50 (Currently Amended): The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the predetermined data is a bias voltage level from a [[CT]] computed tomography apparatus.